

DO YOU LOVE GOD?

—:O:—

We like to think of those we love. When we become attached to an individual, that one is often and much in our thoughts. Do you think *often* of God? Do you think *much* of him? Do you *love* to think of God? And when you do think of him, is it with delight, or with dread?—Are thoughts of him *precious*? Do you cherish thoughts of God; or do you banish them as soon as you can?

We delight in the society of those we love. We wish to be much and often with them. We cannot bear a long absence from them. Do you delight in the society of God? Do you love to hold communion with him? Do you read your *Bible* for this purpose, and frequent your *closet*? What testimony will your Bible and your closet bear in the judgment?—Do you pray at all? When? where? how often? Do you pray once a day? once a week? once a month? Do you

pray in your closet? in your family? in public? *Did you ever pray?*

We *endeavor to please* those we love.— Do you endeavor to please God? From what do you abstain, that you may please him? What do you do, that you may please him? Do you seek his pleasure in anything? How or in what do you serve him? Do you *delight* in his service? Do you *obey* him? He commands all men everywhere to repent. Acts xvii: 30. Do you *obey* that command? And if you do not obey God, how can you *please* him? And if you do not strive to please him, how can you *love* him?

We *are careful not to offend* those we love. We do nothing to injure their feelings, nothing to incur their displeasure. Are you careful not to offend God? But see how you live. You do not obey his commands, nor regard his threatenings, nor accept his invitations, nor embrace his Son, nor yield to his Spirit, nor live to his glory. Suppose a native from the western wilds should visit your dwelling, and abide with you a month or a year, see all you do, and hear all you say; could

he infer from your conduct that there is a God? Must he not conclude, either that there is no God, or that, if there be a God, you do not believe in his existence? Such a conclusion must be natural and necessary, for he would see you eat and drink without thanking God or asking his blessing. He would see you lie down and rise up without prayer; see you plough and sow and attend to your affairs, without any reference to a superintending Providence. In one word, he would see you living practically, to all intents and purposes, without God, an *atheist* in the world. Does the pursuit of such a course show a desire and purpose not to offend God? And if you are not careful to avoid offending God, how can you love him? If you loved God, could you live as you do?

We feel interested in the objects which interest those we love. What interests them, interests us. The conversion of sinners interests the Godhead. As angels love God, so they rejoice over repenting sinners. Luke xv: 10. So do Christians and all holy beings. But the repentance

of a sinner excites no joy in your heart. You are not interested in the advancement of the cause of Christ, and the conversion and salvation of men. If you are, why not repent yourself, and turn to God? If interested in the things which interest God, why not turn from your sins and live, that God, angels, and men may rejoice over you?

We *love the friends* of those we love.—As the circle of their friendship is endeared to them, so is it to us. Their friends are ours, and we love them. Christians are the friends of God. Do you love Christians? Do you love them because they bear the moral image of their divine Master? Do you love them at all? Jesus Christ is the *well-beloved* of the Father, elect, precious. Do you love Jesus Christ? How do you treat him? He is offered you as a Saviour from sin and death, but you receive him not, you reject and despise him. This rejection of Christ and your treatment of him show that you have not the love of God in you. God says, "They will reverence my Son." Matt. xxi: 37. He has a right to expect

this. But you reverence him not. Jesus says, in John v: 43, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not." This he says in proof of the preceding declaration, "Ye have not the love of God in you;" for how could they—how can you, love the Father, when they and you receive not the Son?

But further, *you dislike to have the claims of God urged upon you.* Let the preaching you hear be plain and pointed, or let Christians be faithful in conversation, and very likely you will be offended.—Why? If you loved God, you would delight to hear his truth plainly and faithfully preached, to have your duty plainly and faithfully, but affectionately urged upon you. And how can you love God, when thus opposed to his claims, and displeased when they are pressed upon your attention?

Again, *you have broken the law of God, and yet you feel no sorrow for it.* You are not grieved that you have broken the law of God, and set at naught his commands; how then can you love him?—Love always leads us to embrace the first

opportunity to confess our faults to those whom we have injured; but when did you confess your sins to God? You have injured him by your transgressions; but when and where have you made confession, and sued for his forgiveness?

And *what regard have you for God's honor and glory?* Are you grieved when his name is dishonored and his law broken? Do rivers of waters run down your eyes because men keep not his law? Psa. 119: 136. But how do *you* treat his law, his Bible, his Sabbath, his sanctuary, his worship, his ordinances, his people? Are you honoring and glorifying God? Is this your aim? Is God honored and glorified by your unholy and prayerless and irreligious life? But, reader, not to reason further, I ask you plainly, must you not confess that you have not the love of God in you? Are you not *convinced* that you are wholly destitute of all true evangelical love to God? Whether convinced or not, remember the Saviour says, and it is true, *I know you, that you have not the love of God in you.* This is your condition; I would to God you might realize it, repent of it, and forsake it.

In the above, do we not see most clearly that,

1. *Sinners, unrenewed, are not fit for heaven.* Reader, what would you do in heaven, if admitted there? You have no love to God. You could not delight in his praise. You could not be happy in the society of those who are filled with the love of God. *Negative goodness*, be it remembered, is not sufficient. Nor is *morality* sufficient. Many, it would seem, pride themselves on their *harmlessness*.— They have injured no one; they have done; they say, nothing very bad. This is the amount of their *righteousness*. On this they build their hopes of heaven.— But such hopes are vain. To be *destitute of good fruits* is damning. Matt. xxv: 41—43, and 14—30. “Ye have not the love of God in you,” is the *description and condemnation* of impenitent, unregenerate men. John v: 42. It is a sufficient *crime* to be *destitute* of love to God. Of this crime you are guilty. You do not love God. This has been proved. You therefore are not fit for heaven. You *know* you are not, you *feel* that you are not. If

you die as you are, you must be forever excluded from the paradise of God. Are you willing thus to die, and sink down in endless despair? I know you are not.—Then why not turn and live? Why need so much urging, so much entreaty?

2. Again I remark, *you must be born again, or perish*. There is no escape. To dream of going to heaven as you are, without the love of God in you, with a heart opposed to God and at enmity with him, Rom. viii: 7, is folly and madness. There must be a change, or you are lost. The enmity of your heart must be subdued, and a principle of holy love be begotten within you. You must be renewed in the spirit of your mind, Eph. iv: 23—become a new creature in Christ Jesus, 2 Cor. v: 17—experience the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Titus iii: 5—be born again, John iii: 5–8—born of the Spirit, or you will perish in your sins and sink to hell. Ask, that you may receive. Luke xi: 1–13. And beware how you resist and grieve the Spirit! He will not always strive. Gen. vi: 3.